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WORLD CONFERENCE ON HUMAN RIGHTS

Preparatory Committee
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Item 7 of the provisional agenda

PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE WORLD CONFERENCE AND DOCUMENTATION, INCLUDING THE QUESTION OF THE FINAL OUTCOME

Recommendations concerning the provisional agenda of the World Conference on Human Rights and its preparation submitted pursuant to paragraph 10 of General Assembly resolution 45/155

Report of the Secretary-General

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RECOMMENDATIONS SUBMITTED BY NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS IN CONSULTATIVE STATUS .....

International Federation Terre des Hommes

GE.92-14188/1137K (E)

1. The International Federation Terre des Hommes would like to remind the Preparatory Committee for the World Conference on Human Rights of a subject of great importance, that of the destiny of the world's children. Children, who make up almost half of mankind, are its most vulnerable but also its most promising part. On that account, they deserve the full attention of the World Conference on Human Rights which should take pride in devoting part of its labours to the situation of the rights of the child. Such a line of work would be far from useless, since the rights of the child are still by no means a reality for all.

2. In the developing countries, according to the United Nations Development Programme, 14 million children die annually below the age of five, 180 million children suffer from serious malnutrition, nearly 300 million children do not attend school and about a million children in sub-Saharan Africa carry the AIDS virus. There are also serious violations of the rights of the child in the industrialized countries. Children are not equal, even in misfortune, since girls suffer even more than boys from this state of affairs. These appalling statistics enable us to picture the future that awaits these children when they reach adulthood. The after-effects of these evils can permanently ruin their chances of being integrated into society and prevent them from playing the part of a responsible citizen which, normally, is the right of every person having attained majority. Thus, the whole of society may well be affected in the long run by the various violations of the rights of the child.

3. Within the area of its competence, the World Conference on Human Rights can remedy this situation. By devoting part of its labours to the rights of the child, it would then have time to assess the substantial progress already made in this area and, in particular, to work out strategies for a more accurate implementation of the provisions concerning the rights of the child and to ensure that they are taken into account in preparing any human rights strategy. To that end, it has some very effective international instruments such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child, that came into force in a record time and now has 122 States parties, which have thus demonstrated their sustained interest that they have in the destiny of their children. This Convention, which mixes in a remarkable way civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, demonstrates the need for a comprehensive approach to securing the rights of the child. Other texts can also be of great utility for the work of the World Conference, such as the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children, adopted by the World Summit for Children, and its Plan of Action for implementing the Declaration in the 1990s.

4. The International Federation Terre des Hommes entertains the hope that the Preparatory Committee for the World Conference on Human Rights will take into consideration the difficult conditions of so many of the world's children and that it will study ways of putting them right. When all is said and done, this is in the recognizable interest of everyone, since the way in which we treat children today will determine the nature of the future society that they will build tomorrow, by virtue of the principles we have instilled into them, if we have indeed done so.